

Major clothing retailers in the United States that had bought garments sewn on Saipan settled lawsuits by agreeing to establish a \$1.25 million fund to finance monitoring, compensate workers and create a public education program.

Senator Akaka last year won Senate approval of a bill to extend U.S. immigration and minimum-wage laws to the Marianas and allow "Made in the USA" labels only on garments on which more than half the work had been done by American citizens. The measure died in the House.

More recently, a Labor Department investigation has uncovered similar abuses in American Samoa, with work and living conditions so horrid that some garment workers, mostly women from Vietnam, looked like "walking skeletons."

Similar to the situation on Saipan, up to 250 workers had borrowed \$2,000 to \$7,000 each to acquire their jobs and fly from Vietnam or China to Saipan. Investigators found frequent violations of the Samoan minimum wage (\$2.60 an hour) and numerous abuses, including the beating of workers and withholding of meals as a form of punishment.

Daewoosa, a Korean-owned clothing manufacturer that had made apparel for J.C. Penney Co., closed the plant in January. A judge in Samoa placed Daewoosa under receivership after it failed to pay \$600,000 in back wages and fines resulting from the Labor Department investigation.

Penney had canceled contracts with the factory immediately after learning of the abuses. Daewoosa owner Kil Soo Lee now faces charges of involuntary servitude and forced labor in federal court in Honolulu.

While the semiautonomous status of U.S. territories in the Pacific may vary, the conditions that were found on Saipan and Samoa should be condoned on none of them. As leaders of the U.S. community in the Pacific, Hawaii's congressional delegation should promote legislation to end these human-rights abuses.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER JOHN FRISTACHI

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding Naval Officer, Commander John C.P. Fristachi, who served with distinction and dedication for almost three years for the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations under the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (FM&C) as a Principle Assistant in the Appropriations Matters Office. It is a privilege for me to recognize his many outstanding achievements and commend him for the superb service he has provided to the Department of the Navy, the Congress, and our great Nation as a whole.

During his tenure in the Appropriations Matters Office, which began in April of 1998, Commander Fristachi has provided members of the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense as well as our professional and associate staffs with timely and accurate support regarding Navy plans, programs and budget decisions. His valuable contributions have enabled the Defense Subcommittee and the Department of the Navy to

strengthen its close working relationship and to ensure the most modern, well-trained and well-equipped naval forces attainable for the defense of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, John Fristachi and his wife Betsy have made many sacrifices during his naval career. His distinguished service has exemplified honor, courage and commitment. As they depart the Appropriations Matters Office to embark on yet another great Navy adventure in the service of a grateful nation, I call upon my colleagues to wish them both every success and the traditional Navy send-off "fair winds and following seas."

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in Honor of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. Each year, the second week of April is dedicated to the men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators.

Telecommunicators are civilians across this country who provide the vital link between the public and emergency service responders, be they police, fire or EMS. They provide the radio, telephone, computer and other communication services that save lives and keep our communities safe and secure. Too often, the importance of this job and the contribution these individuals make, go unnoticed.

Today, I would like to recognize and thank the telecommunicators who serve the 20th District of Illinois. They are: Karen Giese, Lora Furlong, Michelle Tarvin, Teri Roadro, Nancy Pohlman, Sarah Richey, DeAnna Fare, Lora C. Furlong, Robert I. Castens, Lillian I. Rutherford, Tammy S. Giacomelli, and Sherri M. Deeder.

Mr. Speaker. I extend my deepest appreciation to these and all telecommunicators for talking distressed callers through CPR, calming hysterical crime victims, and making the difficult decisions using limited information to save lives and reduce property damage on a daily basis.

STRUCTURED SETTLEMENT PROTECTION ACT

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Structured Settlement Protection Act. This legislation protects the Congressional policy underlying structured settlements and brings a final resolution to the issue known as "factoring" of structured settlement payments.

In introducing this legislation, I am joined by my colleague Mr. STARK and by a broad bipartisan group of our colleagues from the Ways and Means Committee, including Mr. HOUGHTON and Mr. COYNE, the Chairman and the

Ranking Minority Member respectively of the Oversight Subcommittee which held a hearing on the structured settlement factoring issue in the last Congress. There are a total of 19 Ways and Means co-sponsors of this important legislation.

I am a long-time supporter of the use of structured settlements to compensate victims of physical injuries. Structured settlements constitute a private sector funding alternative to taxpayer-financed programs to meet the ongoing, long-term medical and living needs of seriously-injured victims and their families. Structured settlements enable these injured people to live with dignity, free of reliance on government. For these reasons, Congress adopted special tax rules to encourage the use of structured settlements to provide long-term financial security to injured victims and their families.

The Structured Settlement Protection Act that I am introducing today addresses concerns which have been raised over the "factoring" of structured settlement payments, in which factoring or settlement purchase companies buy up part or all of the structured settlement recipient's future payments for cash. My legislation is part of a single overall package of complementary Federal and State legislation that has been agreed upon by the structured settlement industry and the factoring industry to resolve these concerns.

Under the Structured Settlement Protection Act, the States are given the consumer protection role. The Act relies upon a State court review process to govern a proposed factoring transaction to ensure that the structured settlement serves the purpose Congress intended—providing long-term financial security for the injured victim and the victim's family—while enabling the victim to get access to future payments should the court determine that such access is in the best interests of the victim, taking into account the welfare and support of the victim's dependents, and does not contravene other applicable statutes and existing court orders.

The complementary State model legislation agreed to by the structured settlement and factoring industries specifies the process for State court review. Legislation similar to the State model has now been enacted in 19 States and is being actively considered in some 20 other States during the current State legislative cycle.

The Structured Settlement Protection Act protects the Congressional policy underlying structured settlements by providing the threat of an excise tax sanction to ensure compliance with State regulation in light of the multi-State nature of the factoring business, as well as resolving Federal tax uncertainties which factoring has created for the other parties to the structured settlement.

The Structured Settlement Protection Act is similar to legislation that I introduced in the last Congress along with Mr. STARK and a similarly broad bipartisan group of our colleagues from the Ways and Means Committee.

This legislation has been agreed to by the National Structured Settlements Trade Association (NSSTA) on behalf of the structured settlement industry and the National Association of Settlement Purchasers (NASP) on behalf of the factoring industry. In light of the